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As the ocean is the goal of all rivers, so Thou art the ultimate goal of different paths, straight or devious, which men follow according to their various tastes and inclinations.

—*Mahinastava*

THEOSOPHY

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A TIME OF TRIAL

AS Mr. Judge more than once remarked, H.P.B. dealt with the mind of the race as she found it, and not the least of the help given in this way was the practical insight she afforded into the part played by cycles in human life. While the great periods of racial evolution supply a symmetrical scheme for understanding the general laws of human development, there are other cycles, far less extensive in time-span, yet which have a profound effect on human feeling by reason of the immediacy of their influence. These might be called moral cycles, and they may have close connection with the "*Karmic* cycles" referred to in *The Secret Doctrine* (I, 642).

The present, in one of its aspects, is certainly a moral cycle. While there are many signs of awakening, especially in respect to human responsibility for the welfare of nature and the earth, the course of public affairs seems filled with disheartening events and degrading tendencies. National figures campaigning for office are quite willing to confide their "strategy" to journalists, implying common agreement that gaining power is the only significant objective of politics. At the same time there is often no more than a ritual reference to principle or to worthy national goals. The popular literature and entertainment of the day has descended to a level of vulgarity never before reached since the development of print and film. The several professions are often exposed in activities which can have no other motive than crude acquisition, and while

some writers still refer to the present as a time of affluence and progress, the concentration of wealth and power in the hands of a few is widely noted and condemned. Each issue of the daily paper seems to contain little more than bad and discouraging news, ranging from natural disasters to corruption in government, from assassination and acts of terrorism in some part of the world to reports of ever increasing violence and crime on every hand.

Looking back into history nearly a hundred years, to that time of confidence and placidity which we identify as the Victorian age, we are impressed mainly by the great contrast between the prospects that men of those days were able to see ahead of them, and the ominous anticipations felt by so many in the present. Seeking orientation and balance, the student of Theosophy may find himself turning to Mr. Judge's *Letters,* to read once again what he wrote to Jasper Niemand early in the first volume:

> The age is black as hell, hard as iron. It is iron, it is Kali Yuga. Kali is always painted black. Yet Kali Yuga, by its very nature and terrible, swift momentum, permits one to do more with his energies in a shorter time than in any other Yuga. But heavens, what a combat! Demons from all the spheres; waving clouds of smoky Karma; dreadful shapes; stupefying exhalations from every side. Exposed at each turn to new dangers. . . . Yes; the gods are asleep for a while. But noble hearts still walk here, fighting over again the ancient fight. They seek each other, so as to be of mutual help. We will not fail them. To fail would be nothing, but to stop working for Humanity and Brotherhood would be awful. We cannot; we will not. Yet we have not a clear road. No, it is not clear. . . .

What sort of letter would Mr. Judge write today, if that was what he saw behind the material scene in 1889? One can hardly say. It is still Kali Yuga and exteriorly the world seems in far worse condition. Yet it is possible to think that what was then on hidden planes is now precipitating, and that other lines of causation from the past, in potencies not perceptible to us, might today be recognized by an occultist capable of seeing the inwardly marked destiny of the cycle. The important thing to note, now, is that, seeing what he saw in those closing years of the nineteenth century, Mr. Judge was neither unbalanced nor disheartened by the spectacle. Nor would he be today.

Somewhat later in 1889 H.P.B. published in *Lucifer* (for December) one of her most powerful articles—"The Fall of Ideals." It is a discussion of cycles, and of much more. She begins with a

vigorous denunciation of the immorality, hypocrisy, and deceit of the times, remarking that people had been brutalized by a psychic famine lasting for generations. Her comment, suggesting the reason for the title of her article, was briefly put: "Thus we find every ideal of old, moral and spiritual, abased to correspond with the present low moral and unspiritual conceptions of the public.

What would *she* say today?

Considering her versatile pen, her adept insight into human attitudes and possibilities, we can suggest only that she might say many, many things, adding, however, that there would also be that larger perspective on human affairs which her pupils feel that they recognize behind everything she wrote. She might affirm, once more, that "the periodical rise and fall of human character on the external planes takes place now, as it did before, and the ordinary average perception of man is too weak to see that both processes occur each time on a higher plane than the preceding."

In this article she speaks, also, of "extreme changes" which may be wrought by swift acting forces—"wars, speculations, epidemics, the devastation of famines or religious fanaticism"—all disasters, we may note, of which our world has an ample supply. Yet what may nonetheless make hope difficult is the very low plane of so much that is now going on, and the degrading standards offered by leaders and accepted by the led. Can we assume that a level of awareness high above "the ordinary average perception of man" might reveal some encouragement in relation to the present scene? It is reasonable to think that such wonderings can be a part of the reflection of many earnest hearts, for who is able to claim much more than "average perception" when looking out upon the world of today?

It is for these, we may think, in both her day and ours, that H.P.B. wrote:

> In a world of illusion in which the law of evolution operates, nothing could be more natural than that the ideals of MAN—as a unit of the total, or mankind—should be forever shifting. A part of the Nature around him, that Protean, ever-changing Nature, every particle of which is incessantly transformed, while the harmonious body remains as a whole ever the same, like these particles man is continually changing, physically, intellectually, morally, spiritually. At one time he is at the topmost point of the circle of development; at another, at

> the lowest. And, as he thus alternately rises and sinks, and his moral nature responsively expands or contracts, so will his moral code at one time embody the noblest altruistic and aspirational ideals, while at the other, the ruling conscience will be but the reflection of selfishness, brutality and faithlessness.

It is these alternations, then, of which we are the bewildered spectators and participants. And when the downward path seems so largely in control of the lives of so many, it becomes difficult indeed to assume the stance of a wise physician who watches over the course of a devastating, feverish disease. Such a healer who has seen the spread of infection, but has also witnessed cycles of strong recovery, does what he can—often what *little* he can, although his "little" may be much from nature's viewpoint—and he waits. There is a sense in which H.P.B., while doing a great deal, was also obliged to wait. She may be waiting, still. We turn, then, to her observations concerning a time when the moral condition of the world reveals mainly "selfishness, brutality and faithlessness":

> But this, however, is so only on the external, illusionary plane. In their internal, or rather *essential* constitution, both nature and man are at one, as their essence is identical. All grows and develops and strives toward perfection on the former planes of externality or, as well said by a philosopher, is—"ever becoming" . . . .
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> Hitherto, it was remarked in almost every historical age that a wide interval, almost a chasm, lay between practical and ideal perfection. Yet, as from time to time certain great characters appeared on earth who taught mankind to look beyond the veil of illusion, man learnt that the gulf was not an impassable one; that it is the province of mankind through its higher and more spiritual races to fill the great gap more and more with every coming cycle; for every man, as a unit, has it in his power to add his mite toward filling it. Yes; there are still men, who, notwithstanding the present chaotic condition of the moral world, and the sorry *debris* of the best human ideals, still persist in believing and teaching that the now *ideal* human perfection is no dream, but a law of divine nature; and that, had Mankind to wait even millions of years, still it must some day reach it and rebecome *a race of gods*.

Can we find comfort in this? Not comfort, perhaps, but some strength, along with growing appreciation of our instruction in the vast extent of cycles of human evolution, and in the almost countless smaller cycles of the rise and fall of nations and civilizations, with the egos involved in them going on and on. . . .

What if we had lived in the declining days of Rome, and saw with saddened eye the disintegrations of character that so sorely troubled Cicero, and finally led to his death? What if, as an Athenian, we witnessed the defeat and conquest of our beloved city by those expert militarists, the Spartans? Could we then, can we now, whether or not it is needful, say, after H.P.B., that we care "but little about the outward human management of the material world"? ("What Are the Theosophists?") Explaining, she added:

> Whether the physical man be under the rule of an empire or a republic, concerns only the man of matter. His body may be enslaved; as to his soul, he has the right to give to his rulers the proud answer of Socrates to his judges. They have no sway over the *inner* man.

Yet we should remember H.P.B.'s love of America, for its noble freedom, and her statement that the Theosophical Society was born in the United States—a country where state religion is guarded against and which provides for "absolute equality to all religions in its laws."

The wider possibilities for the spread of Theosophy in America are noted by H.P.B. in many places, especially in *The Secret Doctrine* (II, 444-46) and in her "Five Messages," although there is much to suggest that there will be many trials and ordeals to go through before the predicted fulfillments can take place.

Again the law of cycles is the monitor and guide. We can hardly think that H.P.B. was unaware of the turbulent events, the precipitations of dark tendencies and the failures of restraint that would come about in this century. She plainly foresaw the obstacles that would beset the Theosophical Movement. Most of the encouragements she offered to students, as in the passages referred to or quoted above, have to do with either the long term of cyclic evolution or with the inner growth that may not be in evidence on the surface of things.

Yet there was also the happy vision offered at the end of *The Key to Theosophy,* giving a picture of the possibilities of the twenty-first century. And Mr. Judge, writing of certain prophecies by H.P.B., emphasized that while she predicted that *The Secret Doctrine* would be rejected in the nineteenth century, she also said that in the twentieth it would be recognized that the teachings she brought ante-dated the *Vedas*. Commenting, he said:

> These words of hers are not the cry of a martyr, but the clear, bold tone of the sage who, while giving out right teach-

> ings in a transitory, a preparatory age, knows full well that present recognition is an impossibility; there is no regret and no note of disappointed hope in it, for she had no such hopes or ambitions to be defeated, and perchance will be on the scene at the time of the prophesied indorsement.

There is much food for thought in this characterization by Mr. Judge. It is as though the human race needs, and has from its teachers, a vision of distant realizations to be accomplished many lifetimes after the epoch in which it appears on the horizon for mankind. One must think, then, that this far-off inspiration or vision is itself an essential ingredient of human development. And one could say that holding such a vision in the heart might well be the only means of acquiring those habits of mind that strengthen conviction of the immortality of the soul, while, at the same time, building into the character the quality of patience, support the willingness to work without reward.

How else is the human race to free itself from the moral desperation that now drives so many to unspeakable offenses against those whom they regard as oppressors? What but the vision of soul evolution can bring about those basic reconciliations which are necessary before the Law of Brotherhood can demonstrate its power on a larger scale than the heroic example of the few?

At the conclusion of her article, "The Fall of Ideals," H.P.B. declared that before the incarnate *Protest* of the downtrodden—of "the heart-broken, hopeless, embittered portion of humanity"—can change into the spirit of fellowship, "all cause for protest must have disappeared from the earth." This is a large order for the prosperous righteous, and a far from palatable prescription to those who exercise power and show no reluctance to enjoy their wealth at the expense of the weak and the destitute. Yet part of the disorder of the time—the greater part, perhaps—grows out of the uncontrollable anger of those who have suffered in silence for centuries, and now, through the mechanical boons of modern communication, are finding both voice and tumultuous approval of their rage from others like themselves. Accounts are indeed being settled among the races. Today the "wretched of the earth" count themselves by the million, and few there are to set them an example of brotherly regard and cooperative help.

Perhaps, in this cycle, Mother Earth will soon take a stronger hand in the instruction of both rich and poor. Sheer necessity

may be able to teach what ethics and the high religions have been unable to make plain. While laws of nature are never in a hurry, there are times, as H.P.B. said, when "swift acting forces" do bring about great changes. Conceivably, if Nature declares in her own way the supremacy of the law of brotherhood, the lessons of cooperation will be learned in no long time by all classes of people. And then, from this compelled awakening, there may be many more who see that acting as human beings are meant to act, and are capable of acting, will thrust aside the barriers of both wealth and want, restoring the human race to a single mankind.

Breadth of Vision

If the idea is held that there is but one life on earth, then all the learning of the man and of the age is limited to a small and narrow range. But if one grasps the idea of successive lives on earth—all under Karma—then, the learning takes on a wider sweep, leading the man to the conception that all powers of every kind proceed from the Supreme, the Self of all creatures; that he himself is in reality a spiritual being, and must think and act as such.

We may not be able to apply, as fully as we and others might desire, all the axioms and reasoning of the philosophy; but what of that? We can apply what is possible and all that is possible to us, and in that application greater understanding and facility arise. Each one has to find *his* way. Words cannot give it, yet there *is* a way for each. Most of the trouble lies in trying to see, trying to hear, trying to "think" it all out, instead of applying what we *do* see. All ability comes very gradually, imperceptibly—felt, grasped, realized, rather than perceived in the ordinary sense.

—Robert Crosbie

DEVACHAN

THE VARIOUS STATES OF DEVACHAN

Reply III

THE foremost question that presents itself to the mind of the occultist of Asiatic birth, upon seeing the multifarious difficulties which beset the European students of Esotericism, as regards Devachan: how to account for their weird fancies with regard to the after states! It is natural for one to measure other persons' intellectual operations by his own; not without an effort can he put himself in his neighbour's place and try to see things from his stand-point. As regards Devachan, for example, nothing would apparently be clearer than the esoteric doctrine, incompletely as it may have been expressed by "Lay Chela"; yet it is evidently not comprehended, and the fact must be ascribed, I think, rather to the habitual differences in our respective ways of looking at things than to the mechanical defects in the vehicle of expression. It would be very hard for an Asiatic Occultist to even conjure up such a fancy as that of Swedenborg, who makes the angels our *post-mortem* "inquisitors," obliged to estimate a soul's accumulated merits and demerits by physical inspection of its body, beginning at the tips of the fingers and toes and tracing thence to centres! Equally baffling would be the attempt to bring ourselves to the point of seriously tracing a denizen of the American Summer-Land of Spirits through the nurseries, debating clubs, and legislative assemblies of that optimistic Arcadian Eden. A warp of anthropomorphism seems to run through the entire woof of European metaphysics. The heavy hand of a *personal* deity and his personal ministers seems to compress the brain of almost every Western thinker. If the influence does not show itself in one form, it does in another. Is it a question about God? A metaphysical slide is inserted, and the stereopticon flashes before us a picture of a gold-paved, pearly-doored New Jerusalem, with its Durbar Hall, peacock throne, Maharajah, Dewans, courtiers, trumpeters, scribes, and general train. Is the intercourse between disembodied spirits under discussion? The Western constitutional bias of mind can conceive

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Note.—This is the third and concluding part of the series of replies to a critic of the sixth installment of "Fragments of Occult Truth," begun in Theosophy for July. These replies first appeared in the *Theosophist* for August, 1883.

of no such intercourse without some degree of mutual consciousness of an objective presence of the corporeal kind: a sort of psychic chit-chat. I hope I do not wrong our Western correspondents, but it is impossible, for myself at least, to draw any other conclusions from the whole tenor of the British Theosophist's memorandum. Vapoury and etherealized as his concept may be it is yet materialistic at the core. As we would say, the germ-point of metaphysical evolution is of Biblical derivation: and through its opalescent vapour sparkle the turrets of the "New Jerusalem."

There is much fanciful exotericism to be sure, in Asiatic systems. Quite as much and more perhaps than in the Western; and our philosophies have many a harlequin cloak. But we are not concerned now with externals: our critic comes upon metaphysical ground and deals with esotericism. His difficulty is to reconcile "isolation," as he understands it, with "intercourse" as we understand it. Though the monad is not like a seed dropped from a tree, but in its nature is ubiquitous, all-pervading, omnipresent; though in the subjective state time, space and locality are not factors in its experiences; though, in short, all mundane conditions are reversed; and the now thinkable becomes the then unthinkable and *vice-versâ*—yet the London friend goes on to reason as though all this were not so. . . .

Now, Buddhistically speaking, there are states and states and degrees upon degrees in Devachan, in all of which, notwithstanding the (to us) objective isolation of the principal hero, he is surrounded by a host of actors in conjunction with whom he had during his last earth-life created and worked out the causes of those effects that are produced first on the field of *Devachanic* or *Avitchean* subjectivity, then used to strengthen the Karma to follow on the objective (?) plane of the subsequent rebirth. Earth-life is, so to say, the *Prologue* of the drama, (or we should, perhaps, call it *mystery*) that is enacted in the *rupa* and *arupa* lokas. Now were we to say that nature, with every due regard to personality and the laws of objectivity as understood in exotericism, "constitutes a veritable intercourse" between the devachanic heroes and actors; and, instead of *dissociating* the monads not only as regards "personal corporeal" but even *astral* "association"—establishes "actual companionship" between them, as on the earth-plane, we might, perhaps, avoid the strange accusation of "nature cheating" in Devachan. On the other hand, after thus

pandering to emotional objections, we could hardly help placing our European Chelas in a far more inextricable dilemma. They would be made to face a problem of the Western deity far into the background of illogical absurdity. Suppose for one moment a Devachanic father, twice wedded, and loving both his wives as he does his children, while the step-mother loves neither his progeny nor *their* mother, the coolest indifference if not actual aversion reigning between the two. "Actual companionship," and "real *personal* intercourse" (the latter applied even to their astral bodies) implies here bliss for the father and irritation for the two wives and children, all equally worthy of Devachanic bliss. Now imagine again the real mother attracting by her intense love the children within her devachanic state, and thus depriving the father of *his* legitimate share of bliss. It has been said before, that the devachanic mind is capable only of the highest spiritual ideation; that neither objects of the grosser senses nor any thing provocative of displeasure could ever be apprehended by it—for otherwise, Devachan would be merging into *Avitchi,* and the feeling of unalloyed bliss destroyed for ever. How can nature reconcile in the above case the problem without either sacrificing her duty to our terrestrial sense of *objectivity* and *reality,* or, without compromising her status before *our* criterion of truth and honest dealing? On one hand, the children would have to double and treble themselves *ad infinitum*—as they too may have disembodied, devachanic objects of spiritual attachment clamouring elsewhere for their presence—which process of ubiquity would hardly be consistent with our notions of personal, actual presence, at one and the same time and at several different places; or, there would always be somebody, somewhere "cheated by nature." To place the *monads* promiscuously together, like one happy family—would be fatal to truth and fact: each man, however insignificant he may have been on earth, is yet mentally and morally *sui generis* in his own distinct conceptions of bliss and desires, and has, therefore, a right to, and an absolute necessity for, a specific, personal, "isolated" devachan.

The speculations of the Western mind have hitherto scarcely ever depicted any higher future life than that of the *Kama* and *Rupa lokas,* or the lower, intra-terrestrial "spirit-worlds." In Appendix D. many states and spheres are hinted at. According even to exoteric Buddhistic philosophy disincarnate beings are

divided into three classes of—(1) *Kamawâchera,* or those who are still under the dominion of the passions in *Kamaloka;* (2) *Rupawâchera,* or those who have progressed to a higher stage, but still retain vestiges of their old form in *Rupa* loka; and (3) *Arupawâchera,* or those who are become formless entities in the *Arupa lokas* of the highest Devachan. All depends on the degree of the monad's spirituality and aspirations. The astral body of the 4th principle—called *Kama,* because inseparable from *Kama loka,* —is always within the attraction of terrestrial magnetism; and the monad has to work itself free of the still finer yet equally potent attractions of its *Manas* before it ever reaches in its series of Devachanic states, the upper-*Arupa* regions. Therefore, there are various degrees of Devachanees. In those of the *Arupa lokas* the entities are as *subjective* and truly "not even as material as that ethereal body-shadow—the Mayavirupa." And yet even there, we affirm there is still "actual companionship." But only very few reach there skipping the lower degrees. There are those Devachanees, men of the highest moral calibre and goodness when on earth, who, owing to their sympathy *for old intellectual researches and especially for unfinished mental work,* are for centuries in the Rupa-lokas in a strict Devachanic isolation—literally so, since men and loved relatives have all vanished out of sight before this intense and purely spiritual passion for intellectual pursuit. For an example of the study-bound (pardon the new word for the sake of its expressiveness) condition, take the mental state of the dying Berzelius, whose last thought was one of despair that his work should be interrupted by death. This is *Tanha* (Hindu *Trishna*) or an unsatisfied yearning which must exhaust itself before the entity can move on to the purely *a-rupa* condition. A provision is made for every case, and in each case it is created by the dying man's last, uppermost desire. The scholar who had mainly lived under the influence of *manas,* and for the pleasure of developing his highest physical intelligence, kept absorbed in the mysteries of the material universe, will still be magnetically held by his mental attractions to scholars and their work, influencing and being influenced by them *subjectively*—(though in a manner quite different from that known in seance-rooms and by mediums.) until the energy exhausts itself and *Buddhi* becomes the only regnant influence. The same rule applies to all the activities, whether of passion or sentiment, which entangle the

travelling monad (the Individuality) in the relationships of any given birth. The disincarnate must consecutively mount each ring of the ladder of being upward from the earthly subjective to the *absolutely* subjective. And when this limited Nirvanic state of Devachan is attained, the entity enjoys it and its vivid though spiritual realities until that phase of Karma is satisfied and the physical attraction to the next earth-life asserts itself. In Devachan, therefore, the entity is affected by and reciprocally affects the psychic state of any other entity whose relationship is so close with it as to survive, as was above remarked, the purgatorial evolution of the lower post-mortem spheres. Their intercourse will be sensed spiritually, and still, so far as any relationship until now postulated by Western thinkers goes, each will be "dissociated from the other." If the questioner can formulate to himself the condition of the monads as pure spirit, the most subjective entity conceivable, without form, color, or weight, even so great as an atom; an entity whose recollections of the last personality (or earth-birth) are derived from the late union of the *Manas* with the lower five principles—he may then find himself able to answer his own interrogatory. According to Esoteric Doctrine this evolution is not viewed as the extinguishment of individual consciousness but its infinite expansion. The entity is not obliterated, but united with the universal entity, and its consciousness becomes able not merely to recall the scenes of one of its earth-evolved Personalities, but of each of the entire series around the Kalpa, and then those of every other Personality. In short from being finite it becomes infinite consciousness. But this comes only at the end of all the births at the great day of the absolute Resurrection. Yet, as the monad moves on from birth to birth and passes its lower and devachanic spheres after each fresh earthly existence, the mutual ties created in each birth must weaken and at last grow inert, before it can be reborn. The record of those relationships imperishably endures in the Akasa, and they can always be reviewed when, in any birth, the being evolves his latent spiritual powers to the "fourth stage of Dhyana": but their hold upon the being gradually relaxes. This is accomplished in each inter-natal Devachan; and when the personal links—magnetic or psychic, as one may prefer to call them—binding the Devachanee to other entities of that next previous life, whether relatives, friends, or family, are worn out, he is free to move on

in his cyclic path. Were this obliteration of personal ties not a fact, each being would be travelling around the Kalpa entangled in the meshes of his past relationships with his myriad fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, wives &c., &c., of his numberless births: a jumble, indeed! It was the ignorant delusion of the geocentric hypothesis which begot all the exoteric theologies, with their absurd dogmas. So, likewise, it is the ignorant theory of monogenesis, or but one earth life for each being, which makes it so hard for European metaphysicians to read the riddle of our existence and comprehend the difference between the monad's individuality, and its physical appearance in a series of earth-lives as so many different, totally distinct personalities. Europe knows much about atomic weights and chemical symbols, but has little idea of Devachan.

The Catalytic Agent

Organic life on earth, while the manifestation of higher intelligence, points to that intelligence so mutely and indirectly that in itself it cannot teach most men or feed their being. Organic life is part of the wholeness of nature, but the universal intelligence it serves reaches into the consciousness of man *through the ideas of a sacred teaching* far more than through the rivers and the mountains. Without the help of real ideas, nature destroys man, or, rather, uses him only as an animal of a certain special kind, "an animal plus something else." To love the song of a bird without loving even more the work of self-understanding, to love nature without loving true ideas, is to forget what it means to be man in the universal world, a being in whom two consciousnesses exist and who requires both extraordinary help and lifelong effort to build something in himself that can bring his two natures into relationship.

—Jacob Needleman

THE MODIFICATIONS OF THE THINKING PRINCIPLE

IF, as Patanjali tells us, this universe exists for the purposes of the soul there must be one general evolutionary law throughout nature. If all evolutionary processes are directed toward the same goal their operations in all departments of nature must be identical. The unity of the impetus behind nature is thus a measurable aid in the comprehension of orderly phenomena that may otherwise seem to be chaotic and purposeless.

Materialistic science has already gone far toward a conformity with the teachings of the secret doctrine. Leaving upon one side all its unwarranted assumptions, all its guesses, and all its illegitimate wanderings from its own domain into the domains of philosophy and religion, we find that it has reached a certain basis of more or less demonstrated fact with which the Theosophist can have no quarrel. The philosopher who argues strictly from that basis will find himself carried irresistibly upon the broad current of occult truth toward a comprehensive system that will explain all the phenomena of nature from the highest to the lowest, from those states of matter that it pleases science to call inorganic up to the loftiest forms of human intelligence. In other words as soon as we know exactly what nature is doing we seem to know also what she intends to do, and to perceive a unity of purpose behind all her activities.

Confining ourselves for the moment to the materialistic conceptions of matter we find certain general conclusions that are of the deepest significance to the ultimate study of the mind and its modifications. For example we are now told that matter is homogeneous in its ultimate nature, that it is in all cases a massing of atoms, themselves containing electrons, and that inconceivable potencies are stored up in those atoms and in the molecules. Furthermore we are told that matter is in no case inert, but that the atoms of which it is composed are in perpetual motion and at a great velocity. We learn also that all atoms are identical in their potencies, and that the apparent differences between them are due to the display of certain powers while others remain latent or unmanifested. The differences between one object and

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Note.—This article was first printed in Theosophy 1:528.

another, for example an orange and a piece of flint, consist only in the different arrangement of the atoms and the potencies that they variously display or conceal. Moreover it is now known that the atoms forming parts of bodies are continually being thrown off into space and their places taken by others. When we remember further that the atoms thus thrown off and attracted are not new matter but that each is saturated with the essence of its experiences, that each becomes a picture gallery of all the events in which it has taken part, we seem to have the ground work for a philosophy of mind that is so obvious as to be almost aggressive.

At this point we may leave materialistic science as having reached the confines of its proper domain. Physical science concerns itself with the observation of material facts and with their due arrangement. Outside these boundaries it becomes a trespasser. It is for philosophy and for religion to say why the atoms act in the way that they do, and to detect the agency of a universal life or consciousness that energises, directs and controls them. And we find the evidences of that universal life or consciousness in the order that pervades nature and in the unvarying arithmetical and geometrical methods that characterize her activities. The laws of periodicity in the chemical elements as indicated by Mendeleef, Bode's law of planetary distances, the symmetries of the color and musical scales, are a few among the more obvious proofs of the order, design and intention that permeate nature, and of an all pervasive consciousness that regulates and controls matter "for the purposes of the soul."

Let us then see in what way these activities of matter, well known immemorially to the secret science and now discovered by the physicist, are related to human evolution and the mysteries of fate and fortune. Let us look moreover at their bearing upon the practical study of occultism and the search for the soul. This may best be done by a reminder of the course of the Monad upward through the lower kingdoms of matter until it manifests as human consciousness, as ourselves.

It is thus evident that when we speak of the Monad in the mineral kingdom we mean the divine consciousness *thinking of itself* as being at that point on its way to an individualized self-consciousness. And because it is thinking of itself as at that stage in its evolution it attracts to itself and energizes the atoms that constitute the mineral kingdom as we know it. The mineral kingdom

is therefore the divine consciousness expressing itself through the medium of appropriately energized atoms that have a corresponding mass and cohesion. Exactly the same thing is implied by the term, the vegetable kingdom. Consciousness is now *thinking of itself* as at a further point in its evolution, and once more it attracts and energizes the appropriate atoms, giving them as before the necessary form and cohesion. But the situation is now somewhat more complex since consciousness is now not only thinking of itself as being at the vegetable stage but it has also brought upward with it the essence of its mineral experiences, and these in their turn continue to attract a certain number of corresponding material atoms for their expression. Therefore by the vegetable kingdom we mean the divine consciousness thinking of itself as at that stage in its evolution, plus its mineral experiences or memories, and therefore both vegetable and mineral atoms must enter into the composition of the plant. The same process is repeated in the animal kingdom, but the material vehicle has now become still more complex, since not only animal atoms but also vegetable and mineral atoms have their parts to play in the animal body, and every one of these atoms preserves the memory of every scene in which it has played a part.

The human kingdom is the—so far, final—stage in the progress of the divine consciousness. We ourselves are that consciousness which is now thinking of itself as at the human stage. That thought process or stage is expressed in matter by the atoms which it has gathered to itself for the formation of the brain and nervous system. But there are also other aggregates of atoms in the human body which express the animal, vegetable and mineral experiences of consciousness, and these also mass themselves into certain organs of the body and preserve the memory of the particular stages of evolution that they represent. Those memories do not intrude upon the normal human consciousness. But they may intrude upon the abnormal consciousness, as in cases of insanity, delirium, or criminal reversion to animal states. The true human consciousness may be imagined as to the apex of a pyramid. Below the apex are strata of the lower states of consciousness through which the human consciousness has passed. Sometimes those lower strata, ordinarily kept under control, may revolt and gain the upper hand, and then we have insanity, mania, delirium or criminality to deal with. We may also have a supposed memory of a past birth.

A simple illustration may be useful. Let us suppose that we

have twelve electric lights, each inclosed in its glass bulb. But the first of these twelve bulbs is opaque and allows no light to pass. The second is less opaque, and we are able to see a faint glow. The third is more transparent, and allows an appreciable amount of light to pass. When we reach the twelfth bulb we find it is quite transparent and the light shines through in its full beauty. To make the parallel more exact let us suppose that the light is conscious and that it has the power by the mode of its activity to render its bulb more and more transparent. It does this by discharging from its bulb those atoms that are opaque, and attracting to take their place other atoms that are transparent. Possibly it finds this difficult to do because it realizes neither its own power nor the translucent beauties that belong to it. There we have a rough picture of mankind. The spiritual consciousness is the same in all, but in some men it shines through a purified and transparent medium. In other men it shines through a medium that is nearly opaque. That is the difference between the saint and the sinner. But the analogy must not be taken too far.

In order to understand exactly what Patanjali means when he speaks of hindering the modifications of the thinking principle let us suppose that our vision is keen enough actually to see some of the finer forces of nature working through men. We should see first of all that every atom in the physical body as well as in the more rarefied bodies is in a state of intense activity. That is admitted by science. We should see the atoms coming and going as a never resting army. That, too, is admitted by science. Every atom discharged from the body is saturated and energized by the essence of its human experience and now goes forth into space to be attracted into other bodies and combinations with which it has affinity as a result of that saturation. We should see the places of these discharged atoms taken by other atoms similarly saturated with experiences gained elsewhere and attracted to ourselves by that same law of affinity or likeness. But there would be nothing fortuitous about this eternal coming and going. It would be wholly regulated by thought. Every discharged or attracted atom would be so attracted or discharged under the compulsion of some particular kind of thought. And according to the nature of the atoms thus selected by our thoughts and appertaining to their corresponding physical organs so should we be healthy or diseased. But it is infinitely more important to note that according to the nature

of those thought-selected atoms so would the various sheaths or bodies become opaque or transparent to the divine light within. Every selfish thought thus draws a blind over the windows of the soul. Every altruistic thought tends to sweep those blinds away. This is no vague morality. It is a definite and positive science, and it is sustained by everything that physics tells us of the laws of matter.

And so we understand why we must "hinder the modifications of the thinking principle," and why this injunction is placed in the forefront of the Yoga aphorisms. We must control the mind because it is the mind that unceasingly calls unnumbered angels or demons to our aid or hindrance. We must control the mind because in obedience to its every energy come the movements to and fro of countless scores of physical atoms each one saturated with the forces that make or mar, each one either veiling or transmitting the spiritual light within. We must control the mind because even the smallest of its thoughts means a rearrangement of the soul's habitation and either a clearer vision of its destiny or a thickening of the curtains that hide its light. Every stage of evolution is an expression of the way in which consciousness is thinking of itself. How then are we thinking of ourselves, for we are that consciousness? There is no impotency that is not thought-produced, no limitation that is not self-created, no opacity of environment that is not self-induced by our magical powers over the atoms of matter that make that environment. In very truth then let us "hinder the modifications of the thinking principle."

Science is not technology, it is not gadgetry, it is not some mysterious cult, it is not a great mechanical monster. Science is an adventure of the human spirit. It is essentially an artistic enterprise, stimulated largely by curiosity, served largely by disciplined imagination, and based largely on faith in the reasonableness, order, and beauty of the universe of which man is part.

—WARREN WEAVER

letters • questions • comment

There seem to be two kinds of creation—that in which spirit both generates and incarnates into material conditions, and the further conditions we then bring into being as a result of our thinking. Is this correct?

The descent into matter might well be described in this way. Involved by implication is the vast extent of evolutionary creation. There are, however, some fundamental considerations in the theosophical view of "creation" that should be held in mind. One is that creation represents an aspect of evolution. It never refers to some miraculous one-time event which produces something out of nothing. The One periodically exhibits aspects of itself, emerging from the ever-present Absolute by degrees. Further, there is a sense in which creation is continuous—an outbreathing balanced by an inbreathing. Thus, the whole universe is regarded as made up of living and evolving embodied consciousness, man being unique only by reason of his self-conscious intelligence.

If we think of man as heir to the two kinds of creation suggested in the question, we see that mankind is presently incarnating in and through matter that is not only unfolding its own possibilities, but also receiving the impressions which result from our long association with it. We might say that the facility of action we achieve in the natural world, its responsiveness to our contact, the development of our bodies, our minds—our whole civilization in fact—becomes possible through the inherent intelligence of matter, so impressionable on the one hand, and so faithful in its reflection of these impressions to us, on the other. We have bodies that are at our command a few short years after birth, and through our sciences we have extended this capacity to control over the natural world. Nature, under Karma, responds to our touch, inevitably revealing the consequences of our achievement or activity, whether benign or separative in tendency. But despite this power over the rest of life, a certain helplessness seems characteristic of the lives of the great majority of men in the present. It may be that many, although having the

means to control their lives, fail in this because they have established relationships with nature growing out of the desire to dominate rather than give aid, leading to manipulation instead of wise direction. Starting with a conception of the universe as an aggregate of inanimate "raw material," we have not recognized the all-pervasive presence of a spiritual life within both ourselves and nature and have woven a network of inadequate relations, based upon faulty assumptions.

The theosophical philosophy invites consideration of another aspect of the equation of do-as-you-would-be-done-by—the reality of the mind in nature. Though not as yet self-conscious and self-determining as man is, the elemental intelligences of nature, which we use or abuse, are engaged in evolution also, working through their own experience toward expression of a higher degree of awareness. The role of man as creator in a universe of embodied consciousness is to further this aim through the reciprocities implicit in his own experience. A passage in *The Secret Doctrine* suggests that "man" is not an end in himself, but rather the fulcrum for raising the evolutionary level of all the life involved in the present period of evolution. "All natures meet and mingle in man."

H.P.B. gives this account of the great evolutionary journey:

> The Doctrine teaches that, in order to become a divine, fully conscious god,—aye, even the highest—the Spiritual primeval INTELLIGENCES must pass through the human stage. And when we say human, this does not apply merely to our terrestrial humanity, but to the mortals that inhabit any world. *i.e.*, to those Intelligences that have reached the appropriate equilibrium between matter and spirit, as *we* have now, since the middle point of the Fourth Root Race of the Fourth Round was passed. Each Entity must have won for itself the right of becoming divine, through self-experience. Hegel, the great German thinker, must have known or sensed intuitionally this truth when saying, as he did, that the Unconscious evolved the Universe only "in the hope of attaining clear self-consciousness," of becoming, in other words, MAN; for this is also the secret meaning of the usual Puranic phrase about Brahmâ being constantly "moved by the desire to create." (I, 106-7.)

By reason of this capacity to know himself, and hence, the universe, man is a creator. Through thought his chains are forged, and by thought will come his release, the bonds or the wider

fields of existence arising through the beings which have provided his access to life.

There are, of course, other ways to consider creation. *The Secret Doctrine* speaks of seven creations through which the monadic essence progressively clothes itself with more complex or subtler means of expression. Following a discussion of these creations, H.P.B. refers to an eighth and a ninth creation, indicating the possibility of high mental perception:

> The "eighth creation" mentioned is no *Creation* at all; it is a *blind* again, for it refers to a purely mental process: the cognition of the "ninth" creation, which, in its turn, is an effect, manifesting in the *secondary* of that which was a "Creation" in the *Primary* (*Prakrita*) Creation. . . . It is the correct perception of our relations to the whole range of "gods" and especially of those we bear to the *Kumaras* . . . "The *Kumaras*," explains an *esoteric* text, "are the Dhyanis, derived immediately from the supreme Principle, who reappear in the Vaivasvata Manu period, for the progress of mankind." (*S.D.* I, 456.)

The Common Work

It is the effort and the sacrifice that bring the ultimate results, but in our zeal it is well to consider what the Masters have done, and do year after year, age after age. They do what They can, when They can, and as They can—in accordance with cyclic law. They conserve the knowledge gained—and *wait*. Knowing this, and doing thus, there can be no room in us for doubt or discouragement. Theosophy is for those who *want* it. We are to hold, wait, and work for those few earnest souls who will grasp the plan and further the Cause. Many have their ears so dulled, or their attention so diverted, that no number of repetitions can reach them —yet Theosophy must be held out continually for all who will listen. That is our self-assumed work; we have our example in H.P.B. and W.Q.J.—as to means, method and manner; let us imitate them, and so do their work in their spirit.

—Robert Crosbie

on the lookout

Neglect of the Dying

An English physician, Richard Lamerton, who lectured in Los Angeles earlier this year on "Care of the Dying," describing the work of the St. Joseph Hospice in London, wrote to the *Los Angeles Times* (May 8) to tell about the obstacles and frustrations he encountered in his attempt to establish a similar hospice in this city. The purpose of such a service would be to relieve persons who are dying of pain and anguish, and Dr. Lamerton found physicians in the area eager to take part in this work. Nurses also told him "how it distressed them to have to give uncomfortable treatments to dying patients long past the time when they could be helpful." Dr. Lamerton discovered, however, that few health insurance policies provide for terminal care. "It seems ridiculous," he said, "that one can have a heart transplant—of doubtful value to very few patients—but not terminal care, which will be needed by all patients and is not very expensive." Concerning the provisions of Medicare, he said:

> . . . the pain control that I have been describing could all be given by mouth, avoiding the discomfort of injections. But Medicare's wise and wonderful designers decided that if the patients stop having injections and receive visits in which only oral medication is supervised, this does not qualify for payment!

Insurance Problems

Lookout for June took note of Norman Cousins' comment (in *Saturday Review*) on the crisis precipitated in the practice of medicine by the enormous cost of malpractice insurance, in which he said that "the main issue is not malpractice insurance but malpractice itself." However, Dr. Lamerton's report shows that physicians are under considerable pressure, due to fear of malpractice actions, to institute treatments in which they do not themselves believe. Dr. Lamerton ended his letter by saying:

> But the biggest and most serious impediment [to considerate terminal care] was described by the physicians. They dare not, I

was told, stop expensive, uncomfortable treatments designed to cure, even in obviously incurable patients, and even though they themselves feel that such inappropriate treatment may be bad medicine.

They dare not because the family of the patient may subsequently sue them for not giving more blood transfusions, drugs, radiation, operations and the like. This is shocking, and one is tempted to say that America is getting the health service it deserves.

An "Insane Situation"

He asks:

Is there no chance of a respite so that good care of the dying can be practiced in California? What on earth are judges thinking of when they let such childish lawsuits proceed? Do they have such pathetic faith in the limited powers of medicine that they expect doctors to be dispensers of immortality?

Even worse, what kind of a legal profession is it which will advise families to behave like this? Could it be because they know they will get a cut out of the winnings? One has to admit that medical fees are inflated by greed; but much more so are they raised by the physician's having to pay so much [for] malpractice insurance. (My insurance in England is $£0 per year, and I know no doctor who has ever been sued.)

Clearly the situation is insane. I hope, for the sake of the people of Los Angeles, that it can soon be straightened out.

Factors for Change

How are such situations, so common in America, "straightened out"? First, it seems clear, must come restoration of trust. Equally important is recognition that doctors are not, as Dr. Lamerton says, "dispensers of immortality." Finally, understanding and acceptance of death would go to the core of the problem. A lesser consideration would be to free the practice of the healing arts from the methods dictated by technological imperatives and financial manipulations. Conceivably, in practical terms, the growing popularity of unorthodox forms of medicine or healing will make reforms in medical orthodoxy more attractive to responsible physicians. Meanwhile, the widespread rejection of materialist assumptions, on which so much of modern medicine is based, should have its leavening effect.

"We Didn't Know Anything"

A good example of how people change the direction of their

lives is found in a recent book, *What Do We Use for Lifeboats When the Ship Goes Down* (Harper & Row paperback, 1976)—by a writer who signs himself *my* — in the chapter on the scientific research group known as the New Alchemists near Woods Hole, Mass. Six or seven years ago the principal founder of this group, John Todd, a biologist, was teaching some graduate students a course on Cold-Blooded Vertebrates somewhere near the Mexican border. The work seemed sterile to both Todd and the students. As Todd put it:

> It occurred to me that here I'd been in university since 1957, thirteen or fourteen years in academia—and many of these students had been in almost as long as I had—and we simply weren't trained in sensitive stewardship. We didn't know anything. Science hadn't trained us to be able to answer the most fundamental questions: How do you make that piece of earth sing, and how do you make it support those that live there? Degrees in agriculture, disease ethology, ecology . . . nothing!

Ecological Bioshelter

The group began to study the region with fresh eyes, and the piece of land "came alive." A few years later Todd and some associates leased ten acres of wasted, sandy land on Cape Cod and began experiments in gardening and fish farms, windmills and solar heating. With the help of some funding from Robert Rodale of Rodale Publications and the Soil Health Foundation, they were able to develop a small staff and carry on intensive work, adding, as time went on, branch projects in California and Costa Rica. Most impressive of the achievements of the New Alchemy Institute is the Ark constructed for Prince Edward Island in the gulf of the St. Lawrence. The Ark is "an ecologically designed bioshelter powered and heated by the wind and sun." It includes living quarters and a research laboratory, family garden, greenhouse and fish farm. The project is an experiment in self-sufficiency in biological systems. Providing for intensive food production, its ultimate goal is "to create shelters that sustain and support their inhabitants."

Self-Regulating Ecosystems

The Ark is pictured and described at length in the current issue of the *Journal of the New Alchemists* (available for $6.00 from the Institute, P.O. Box 432, Woods Hole, Mass. 02543). In a

general article in the *Journal* Mr. Todd presents the outlook on which such activities are based:

> If it were possible, and I believe that it is, to design and create semi-contained ecosystems, such as our ark, that trap and store the sun's heat and sustain biological food webs with food for humans as an end product, and to do so without continuing recourse to waning or dangerous energy sources, and if the skeletons or frameworks of these ecosystems were made of long-lived materials, then they might prove potent enough bio-social tools to initiate fundamental changes in the societies which adopt them. The theoretical ideal of an agriculture that incorporates self-regulating, semi-autonomous ecosystems is appealing in both ecological and social terms. I think not to explore the possibility based to a large degree on terrestrial capsules would be to overlook a major potential biological contribution to the reconstruction of the planet within an ecological framework. . . .

Far-Reaching Possibilities

> If modern industrial agriculture were replaced with a diversity of alternatives that included small, biologically-gardened or farmed regions during the normal growing season and terrestrial capsules such as arks for year-round production of foods, then a good deal beyond agriculture would be affected.
>
> Such a transformation would benefit society in many ways. The replacement of fossil fuel agriculture might alleviate some of the impact of the seemingly inevitable economic crash or famine. It would encourage agriculture to be less corporate, and to re-establish it as a local and regional pursuit, involving, as it eventually must, a much larger proportion of society. The massive food transport and storage systems which are dominated by powerful corporations and reflect non-productive energy drains would be minimized. Such a decentralization of agriculture would shift food production back to the basic units of society, permitting it to become an urban as well as a rural pursuit. This decentralization might in turn lead to a repopulation of the countryside and perhaps even to the rebirth of a diversity of cultures and customs which are bioregional in their content.

Unimagined Paths Ahead

This twenty-four-page article by John Todd concludes:

> We look out at the world, and yet are of it. It is no accident that our attempt to affirm these mysterious linkages involves touching upon that which is holy or sacred. Such feelings cause me to wonder if there are further threads outward in this continuum. If so, is it possible that there is a relationship be-

tween what we do in the world and our religious reconstructions of it? Might there be such a thing as a monocrop of the mind? It seems reasonable to ask whether some of the masculine, monistic religions of the world are a reduction of much that is holy, and a reflection of our mindscape and the imprint of our surroundings upon it. . . .

I have come to believe that there are many unimagined paths ahead. In our hurry to dominate and control the earth we have become blind to its possibilities. This feeling for the future comes from my experience with many ideas and images contained in miniature at New Alchemy.

Standing in the Courts

Growing awareness of the "rights" of all living things is also a noticeable trend, these days. Former Supreme Court Justice Douglas attracted widespread attention in 1972 when he proposed, in a dissenting opinion in the Mineral King Case, that both the wild creatures of nature and their habitats should have the right to legal defense of their welfare and survival. He said:

So it should be as respects valleys, alpine meadows, rivers, lakes, estuaries, beaches, ridges, groves of trees, swampland, or even air that feels the destructive pressures of modern technology and modern life. The river, for example, is the living symbol of all life it sustains or nourishes—fish, aquatic insects, water ouzels, otter, fishes, deer, elk, bear, and all other animals, including man, who are dependent on it or who enjoy it for its sight, its sound, or its life. The river as plaintiff speaks for the ecological unit of life that is part of it. Those people who have a meaningful relationship to that body of water—whether it be a fisherman, a canoeist, a zoologist, or a logger—must be able to speak for the values which the river represents and which are threatened with destruction.

While the logic of this appeal is framed by legal considerations, the spirit of the underlying fraternity and interdependence of all life plainly animates Justice Douglas' argument, which was widely quoted in the press and has since become a part of the environmental and ecological outlook. Now, in *Science* for May 14, a reviewer devotes attention to a new book, *Animal Liberation* by Peter Singer, which seems to represent another chapter in the progressive recognition of the unity of living things. Human beings, Mr. Singer maintains, simply because they are capable of moral feelings and judgment, are obligated to treat other forms of sentient life with consideration and respect. This obligation

arises out of our awareness that animals are able to experience pain and pleasure; the animals have no such obligation, he says, because they are not by nature morally responsible. Humans, in other words, by reason of their self-consciousness, are the elder brothers of lower forms of life.

Alternate Diet

Much of *Animal Liberation* is devoted to criticism of meaningless cruelty to animals. The author gives attention in particular to vivisection and the unnecessary expansion of the meat industry. The reviewer summarizes:

> We can easily exist on a purely vegetarian diet and are morally obligated to do so. . . . Singer discusses in some detail our massive inhumanity to chickens, pigs, and beef and dairy cattle. . . . To make matters worse, we already possess a feasible and highly desirable dietary alternative to meat—grains, fruits, vegetables, and other plant products. In fact, the supply of food available to human beings would be increased if we stopped the extremely inefficient process of feeding so much of it to animals intended for human consumption. Ideally we should eliminate the meat industry altogether. . . .

Concerning vivisection, Singer says:

> All that we need to say is that experiments serving no direct and urgent purpose should stop immediately, and in the remaining areas of research, methods involving animals should be replaced as soon as possible by alternative methods not involving animals.

The Offense of "Speciesism"

The reviewer quarrels with Mr. Singer on the ground that giving man all the "moral obligations" is unfair, since the animals are said to *"owe us nothing."* This criticism is developed at some length, but here we need only point out that the "morality" invoked by such an argument is that of the contract, of business or fair exchange. Mr. Singer might properly point out that sacrifice has meaning only in the human kingdom, that the spirit of service to others is uniquely human and rises above notions of "fairness." A Theosophical reader may feel that *Animal Liberation* is flawed by its insistence on evolutionary theory, contending that only a "religious fanatic" can believe that humans are "separate and distinct from other species," yet the broad influence of the book is likely to be simply in behalf of a deeper sense of the brotherhood

of all life. Indeed, using the term "speciesism" in a sense similar to that of "racism," the author says:

> To avoid speciesism we must allow that beings which are similar in all relevant respects have a similar right to life—and mere membership in our own biological species cannot be a morally relevant criterion for this right.

In other words, wherever there is sentience—sensitiveness to pain and pleasure—brotherhood is the ruling moral principle, not exploitation serving self-interest.

"Barbarous and Shameful"

Interestingly, in her article, "Have Animals Souls?", H. P. Blavatsky defends "animal rights" on the ground of the falsity of Christian doctrine that animals are without a surviving principle, and of the scientific claim, traceable to Descartes, that animals are but machines of a sort. She goes back to St. Paul for a text (Romans viii, 18-23) to show that the great Christian Initiate understood the pain suffered by animals as well as men, and H.P.B. explains that behind his words was the knowledge that the indestructible element of the animal soul goes on, after the creature's death, to higher forms. Both animals and man, she suggests, are part and parcel of the stream of universal evolution. She said in conclusion:

> The writer is not simple enough to imagine, that a whole British Museum filled with works against meat diet, would have the effect of stopping civilized nations from having slaughterhouses, or of making them renounce their beefsteak and Christmas goose. But if these humble lines could make a few readers realize the real value of St. Paul's noble words, and thereby seriously turn their thoughts to all the horrors of vivisection—then the writer would be content. For verily when the world feels convinced—and it cannot avoid coming one day to such a conviction—that animals are creatures as eternal as we ourselves, vivisection and other permanent tortures, daily inflicted on the poor brutes, will, after calling forth an outburst of maledictions and threats from society generally, force all Governments to put an end to those barbarous and shameful practices.

Western Religion Responsible

In another article, "Why do Animals Suffer?", she says:

> . . . It may be useful, if once more disagreeable, to some religionists to be told that the blame for this universal suffering falls entirely upon our Western religion and early education.

> Every philosophical Eastern system, every religion and sect in antiquity—the Brahmanical, Egyptian, Chinese and finally, the purest as the noblest of all the existing systems of ethics, Buddism—inculcates kindness and protection to every living creature, from animal and bird down to the creeping thing and even the reptile. Alone, our Western religion stands in its isolation, as a monument of the most gigantic *human* selfishness ever evolved by human brain, without one word in favor of, or for the protection of the poor animal. Quite the reverse. For theology, underlining a sentence in the Jehovistic chapter of "Creation," interprets it as a proof that animals, as all the rest, were created for man! *Ergo*—sport has become one of the *noblest* amusements of the upper ten. Hence—poor innocent birds wounded, tortured and killed every autumn by the million, all over the Christian countries, for man's recreation. Hence also, unkindness, often cold-blooded cruelty, during the youth of horse and bullock, brutal indifference to its fate when age has rendered it unfit for work, and ingratitude after years of hard labour for, and in the service of man. In whatever country the European steps in, there begins the slaughter of the animals and their useless decimation.

The Purchase of "Health"

An editorial in the same issue of *Science* (May 14) points out that the private and public expenditure of billions each year in support of the national "health-care" system may produce comparatively little in the way of actual benefit to people. In 1950, the writer, Philip Abelson, says, funds spent on health care were $12 billion, but by 1975 the amount had grown to $118.5 billion The portion of this amount contributed by federal expenditures was $34 billion. There was of course a vast inflation of "health costs" with the advent of Medicare and Medicaid. The facts recited by Dr. Abelson hardly need comment:

> The public assumes that large expenditures for health care will bring better health. This assumption is questionable. During the early part of this century life expectancy in the United States steadily increased, but it reached a plateau in 1954. In 1967 W. H. Forbes explored the relation between national expenditures in behalf of health and actual results. He concluded that we could halve or double the total expenditures without changing longevity. This was in a year when only $42 billion was spent.
>
> Since 1967 others have pointed out that most of the deaths in the age range 10 to 70 either are due to degenerative diseases or are fatalities arising from accidents, suicide, or homicide. The big killers are coronary heart disease, cancer, and stroke. Treat-

ment of these diseases is often costly. Their incidence is related in part to life-style, for example, sedentary living, poor diet, obesity, smoking.

Because treatment of degenerative diseases is not uniformly successful and since the course of some of them can be altered by changes in the patient's behavior, there is increasing interest in preventive medicine. Frederick C. Swartz, M.D., has stated that "our greatest health problem is in the physical fitness of the Nation. Here the answer is the simplest and the cheapest, has the greatest application, and its reflection on the reduction of morbidity and mortality rates would be immediate and tremendous. It is entirely possible that a well-practiced physical fitness program begun early in life would increase life expectancy by 10 years. . . ."

Need for "Specific Information"

Studies seem to show that longevity depends on a combination of factors. Prominent among them are good nutrition, weight control, abstention from excessive drinking of alchohol and from cigarettes, and getting enough exercise and sleep. Faced with the prospect of giving up smoking and engaging in vigorous exercise, many people would just as soon take their chances. However, others would like to pursue a more prudent course. They would be encouraged to do so if they had specific information about the effort required to increase their life span.

Substantially better health cannot be bought with $118.5 billion. Isn't it time the nation began to pay more attention to approaches that promise great improvement at little cost?

Reform, as anyone can see, is urgently needed, but there can be little change until people begin to recognize that health is not a commodity that can be purchased from professional dispensers, and that the responsibility for physiological well-being belongs primarily to the citizen, not the doctor.

Results of "Infinite Care"

There is a further consideration, seldom noticed in the debates about the soaring costs of medical attention but emphasized at the beginning of this editorial in *Science*:

When the major fraction of medical costs is borne by a third party, demand for care is practically infinite. Patients urgently seek treatment, even surgery, on the basis of trivial symptoms. Distraught relatives hope to prolong the lives of moribund loved ones. Fearing malpractice suits, many physicians practice medicine defensively, ordering more tests and procedures than they otherwise would.

Here, again, we see reflected in human behavior and expectation the massive effects of the materialistic assumptions of the age. Put in the place of loving care by relatives and dear ones are the mechanized and costly services of technological medicine, bureaucratically administered and dogmatically applied, the cost of which impoverishes not only individuals and families, but also the nation, which can ill-afford such continually mounting expense. It begins to appear that only the breakdown and collapse of such a system will stimulate a change in outlook and method sufficient to bring the necessary reforms.

"Theosophy" in the "Britannica"

The article on Theosophy in the new *Encyclopedia Britannica* improves on the account in the previous (1953) edition by giving more prominence to the work of H. P. Blavatsky and by providing briefly quoted statements of the three fundamental propositions, found early in *The Secret Doctrine,* as the central ideas of the Theosophical philosophy. The article, which is by Carl T. Jackson, associate professor of history at the University of Texas, begins:

> Theosophy is a religious philosophy with definite mystical concerns that can be traced to the ancient world but is of catalytic significance in religious thought in the 19th and 20th centuries. The term theosophy is derived from the Greek *theos,* "god," and *sophia,* "wisdom" and is usually translated as "divine wisdom." The literal translation of the term, however, indicates its meaning only in a general sense. Confusion may be avoided by a recognition of two uses of the word. In modern times it has been widely identified with the doctrines promoted by the Russian-born religious mystic Mme. Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831-91) through the Theosophical Society founded by her and others in 1875. The term may also be employed in a more general sense to refer to a certain strain of mystical thought to be found in such thinkers as the Greek philosophers Pythagoras (6th century B.C.) and Plato (5th-4th century B.C.); the Gnostic teachers (adherents of a dualistic religious-philosophical movement) Simon Magus (1st century A.D.) and Valentinus (2nd century A.D.); the Neoplatonic philosophers Plotinus (3rd century A.D.) and Proclus (5th century A.D.) . . .

Brief History

Named as later figures in the more general Theosophical movement are Meister Eckhart, Nicholas of Cusa, Paracelsus, Gior-

dano Bruno, and Böhme. "There is," the writer also states, "no question about the validity of the claim of direct Asian influence upon modern theosophical thought." A brief history of the modern movement credits William Q. Judge with "making the American section the most active in the international movement," and lists some of the splits which followed the death of H.P.B. The bibliography at the conclusion of the article gives H.P.B.'s *The Secret Doctrine* and *The Key to Theosophy* and names *The Theosophical Movement, 1875-1950* as "a recent full-scale history." The writer identifies the Theosophical Society as "a catalytic force in the 20th-century revival of Buddhism and Hinduism and a pioneering agency in the promotion of a greater Western acquaintance with Eastern thought." While some of the texts suggested for study are likely to be misleading or confusing, the primary emphasis of this *Britannica* article is on H.P.B. and her writings.

Man's Self-Made Future

The account of the Theosophic teaching of evolution includes the following:

> As a phrase of this evolutionary process, it is held that man undergoes the same (sevenfold) progression, eventually reaching perfection. Reincarnation and karma (the law of cause and effect) govern the evolution. Man must expect to undergo a series of rebirths or reincarnations in the course of his spiritual ascent since the law of evolution is determined by karma. Each action, desire, or thought produces a result. This is not, it is insisted, a fatalistic viewpoint; each man is free to choose his own course. One's future life, however, will be determined by the actions in the present life. The result is that "As a man soweth, so shall he also reap."